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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000227

SIPDIS

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EUR/ERA FOR JOHN ROBINSON

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SO, SU, KPAL

SUBJECT: SPAIN'S VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF FEBRUARY 12 GAERC

REF: STATE 13840

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Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Poloff met with MFA Subdirector General for Foreign Policy and Common Security Carlos Fernandez-Arias on February 9 to discuss Spain's views in advance of the February 12 GAERC meeting. Fernandez-Arias said that the EU's external statements of unity on Kosovo would not reflect the reality of the ongoing internal division on the matter. The other major agenda items will be Serbia, Iran and Afghanistan, and possibly the Middle East. He said that the ministers would also discuss the plight of the nurses in Libya as well as a means for including Zimbabwe in the EU-Africa ministerial to be hosted by the Portuguese presidency later in the year. END SUMMARY.

//KOSOVO AND SERBIA//

12. (C) Fernandez-Arias told Poloff that the EU would make public statements in support of the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo, but he cautioned that such statements were not indicative of the internal opinions of some member states, Spain included. Spain sees a need for flexibility on the timing of negotiations, and Fernandez-Arias said that it is impossible to proceed until the new Serbian government has at least had a chance to make a formal statement on the Ahtisaari plan. Additionally, he said that in order to achieve EU unity on Kosovo, a new Security Council resolution would be necessary. Without such a resolution one of two things would happen: either UNSCR 1244 would be renewed and would prove unacceptable to all parties; or Kosovo would unilaterally declare independence which would quickly be followed by an independence declaration from the Kosovar Serbs, and the international community would be unable to achieve consensus on recognition.

13. (C) Fernandez-Arias rejected the going argument that the success of a new UNSCR resolution on Kosovo hinges on Russia. Spain's analysis of the issue was that Russia does not have a coherent long-term plan for the Balkans and is merely grandstanding to throw its weight around. He said there was no depth to Russia's opposition, and that Russia would accept Belgrade's decision on a new UNSCR. Therefore he suggested that Belgrade should be the focus of all efforts.

14. (C) To that end, he agreed on the need for sustained EU engagement with Serbia and Kosovo on the prospects of EU integration. He said that the best thing the EU can do is dangle EU membership and its implicit economic prosperity in

front of both Pristina and Belgrade in order to compel good behavior.

//MEPP//

15. (C) Fernandez-Arias said he had not yet seen a readout on the Mecca summit and therefore could not speculate on whether the Palestine National Unity Government would be on the agenda for the GAERC. However, he said that Spain would be contributing an additional 4 million euros to the Temporary International Mechanism, and he said that the consensus in Europe was that the Quartet meeting was positive.

//IRAN//

16. (C) Spain continues to support a "double track" for Iran, pushing for the broadest possible interpretation of UNSCR 1737 while exploring means to keep avenues open for dialogue.

For Spain, the priorities are twofold: to avoid a total confrontation which would only empower Iranian hard-liners; and to dissuade the "increasingly nervous" Israel from taking unilateral action against Iran. Fernandez-Arias said that Spain would not support any sanctions that go outside the bounds of the resolution. On the question of arms sales to Iran, he said that while arms sales were not addressed in 1737, a de facto embargo on arms sales to Iran already existed in Europe and Spain supports it. He said that the Spanish analysis is that the economic pressure on Iran is having an effect, that Iran's economy is suffering, and that some Iranians both within and without the government are showing signs of discontent.

17. (C) Fernandez-Arias said that the GAERC would engage in some "brain-storming" on ways to reach out to Iranian civil society and political leaders. Poloff asked if it were possible that the EU might dedicate funds to this endeavor, but Fernandez-Arias said it was very preliminary.

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//AFGHANISTAN//

18. (C) Fernandez-Arias expected that the GAERC will successfully move forward with plans for a police mission in Afghanistan, saying that almost all EU partners are on board.

He said that from Europe's perspective, the mission in Afghanistan entails both military and development aspects, and eliminating terrorism requires responding to the Afghani people's needs. To that end, he said that Spain and others were also focused on strengthening the police, judicial institutions, local governance and infrastructure outside of Kabul. He acknowledged the importance of the military side of the equation and made clear that any decisions there were the responsibility of President Zapatero.

//DARFUR, SUDAN, SOMALIA//

19. (C) The GAERC will likely not discuss Darfur but will issue a consensus statement in line with the U.S. position. He said the current EU priority is to look for funds for AMIS in the intervening period before a hybrid force can deploy. Poloff mentioned that the U.S. has begun actively seeking contributions for the heavy package, and Fernandez-Arias noted that Spain had already offered aircraft to AMIS but had been rejected.

110. (C) Fernandez-Arias noted that Somalia represented a slightly different case and noted that the EU wanted to see more success and progress by the Somali government before making commitments in Somalia.

//LIBYA//

111. (C) The GAERC will likely continue its previous discussion on means to resolve the crisis of the European and Palestinian nurses condemned to death in Libya.

//ZIMBABWE//

¶12. (C) Lastly, Fernandez-Arias signaled that the Portuguese, Spanish and others might gang up on the United Kingdom in order to permit a Zimbabwean representative at the Portuguese hosted EU-Africa ministerial later this year. EU sanctions, most heartily supported by the UK, prohibit Zimbabwean officials from traveling to the EU. However, the African Union has indicated to conference organizers that the conference will not go forward without Zimbabwe's presence. Fernandez-Arias likened the situation to the Finns permitting Burma to attend the ASEM summit, and he suggested that the EU would find a way to finesse the situation to make it work, given its significant development and security priorities in Africa.

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